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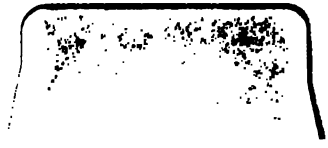

THE

BURIAL OF POLAND.

Pour vous Polonais, anciens frères d'arms,
Il ne reste plus que des larmes.

LA FAYETTE.

A SKETCH

OF THE

HISTORY OF POLAND.

BY

T. A. GALECKI,

A POLISH EXILE.

Die Weltgeschichte ist
Das Weltgericht.

SCHILLER.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

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1842.

DEDICATION.

TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

BANISHED from their native soil, and persecuted through all continental kingdoms, the Polish Wanderers, seeking refuge on the shores of Britain, have been received with a generous hospitality which has alleviated their undeserved misfortunes. Gratitude for this benevolence towards my unhappy brethren, and the desire of keeping alive feelings of compassion for the fate of my suffering country, have induced me to write the following pages, which I respectfully dedicate to the noble-minded and generous inhabitants of Britain, to whom I submit them in the intimate conviction that their sympathy for our past and present sufferings will not cease until their energetic assistance shall have enabled us to recover our native country.

THE AUTHOR.

THE

BURIAL OF POLAND.

It is the melancholy task of the writer of these pages to call to the minds of his British readers the disasters of his native country, of Poland,—once great and powerful among the nations of Europe,—of Poland, that *was*, and is no more!—Europe, boasting of having carried civilization to the highest state of perfection, of having established the social and political condition of all countries upon the principles of right and humanity, of extending her charitable care even to the unfortunate sons of the African climate,—this same Europe has looked with indifference at those unexampled calamities, by which a whole nation has been blotted from the tablet of existence. The autocrat ruler of numberless millions of slaves issued from the centre of his ill-begotten power the infernal decree, that the population of a civilized and Christian country should be exterminated from the face of the earth; and the diabolical com-

mand of a barbarian tyrant has been executed, while the rulers of the most civilized countries of the world looked quietly at the work of bloodshed and destruction, nay, partly aided by their own efforts in accomplishing the slaughter of an entire nation.

Poland is no more! and her exiled children are wandering through distant climates, weeping for the loss of their country, and imploring, by the mute exhibition of their mournful destiny, the commiseration of those who have hearts to feel the woes of their brethren. But the exiled sons of Poland, the remnants of that which was once the pride of Europe, ought not to confine their feelings at the destruction of their beloved country to useless tears. Those who remained at home, upon the gory soil of their enslaved country, are fettered down into mute oppression, and even the stifled groan that escapes from the lips of those victims is considered as a crime, and punished by unheard-of cruelty; but we, who preferred renouncing that home, which is no longer our country,—we, who are wandering through foreign lands, sitting down by the waters of Babylon, and mixing our tears with the waves that beat against foreign coasts,—we at least have preserved the right of raising the cry of woe against our tyrant; of lifting up our voices, and repeating the mournful tale of our disasters, repeating it until our voice must succeed in awakening in the breasts of our hearers a sympathy powerful enough to lead, in the onward flow of time, to the restoration of our unforgotten fatherland! Would that I had the eloquence of that British poet, who sung in melodious stanzas the downfall of that doomed city of Zion,

of which our own Warsaw, once so powerful, recals the mournful destruction,—although the Polish capital resembled that of the Jews only in its misfortunes, but was never stained by similar crimes.

From the nearest hill that looks down on the once sacred walls of Praga, I gazed upon its ruins, and the last beams of the sun fell upon the scattered remains of those abodes where the playful days of my childhood, the glowing hours of my youth, had passed in unforeboding happiness. There I vowed, in the hidden shrine of my oppressed heart (and thousands vowed like me), never to renounce that holy affection which, with unseen fetters, binds every human being to the ground of his native soil, however his exiled foot may wander in distant countries; there I vowed, if unable to raise my arms in battle for re-conquering our country, at least never to cease from raising my voice on every occasion to commemorate its past glory, its present misfortunes, and its claims and hopes for future resurrection. Faithful to this sacred vow, I do not shrink from fulfilling it by dedicating these lines to the British nation; and even the idea that the same tale of woe and wrong has been told by more powerful and eloquent predecessors cannot withhold me; for I may, perhaps, supply by strength of feeling, what is wanting to me in talent, and may succeed in instilling into the breasts of my readers a drop of that burning stream of grief and indignation which flows within my own bosom.

I shall not task the forbearance of my readers by repeating

the details of the past glory of Poland; it is sufficient to remember that during the dark time of the middle ages, when the greater part of Europe was buried in ignorance and anarchical warfare, there prevailed in Poland a state of wise and equitable legislation, under the sway of which the tender plants of art and literature grew up in a fertile soil, and the first dawn of European civilization broke forth on the horizon of Poland. During centuries she was the sea of enlightened knowledge, or rather the sacred rock on which the waves of northern barbarism were broken, before they reached the milder climes of south-western Europe. But this brilliant and glorious destiny of Poland, instead of filling the hearts of her neighbours with gratitude and kind feelings, excited emotions of hatred and jealousy in the breasts of the ambitious rulers of the neighbouring country. These feelings, although most base and unworthy, had their natural origin in the circumstance that the kingdom of Poland was the centre of gravity around which the European equilibrium was reposing. The surrounding countries owed to her the maintenance of order and the blessings of peace; but in the eyes of their ambitious rulers this constituted the real crime of Poland,—that she checked, with a quiet and powerful sway, the daring outbreak of their evil propensities. They waited in silent anger for an opportunity of breaking through the wall of peace erected in Poland, and, alas! that opportunity offered itself but too soon. Sigismund, King of Poland, who reigned in the beginning of the 16th century, and whose reign was the golden age of his country, died without leaving a male issue of his race. From that ime Poland became an electoral kingdom, and the contests for

the possession of her crown, or for the exercise of power and influence in the bestowal of it, destroyed that internal concord of her nobles, which, during centuries, had been the palladium of her power. But even from the darkness of that period of internal discord and popular agitation there shine forth some gleams of brightness, which stand in history like monuments of glory; and the services she rendered to Europe, even during the time of internal struggle, are sufficiently great to deserve eternal acknowledgment, and to make the indifference of Europe at the downfall of Poland appear as the blackest ingratitude.

Although it is degrading for an individual to boast of his personal achievements, yet it is delightful and glorious to dwell upon the merits and the deeds of glory and bravery which belong to one's country. Ye sons of Albion! who repeat with pride the song which celebrates the sway of Britain over the waves of the Ocean,—who are proud to behold the greatness and power, the wealth and prosperity, of your happy island,—do not regard with a contemptuous smile the exiled offspring of a degraded and downcast country, if he indulges a melancholy pleasure in turning from the sad view of present humiliation to contemplate with tearful looks the happier scenes of by-gone glory.

Who has not heard of the glorious deeds of John Sobieski, the hero who, with a devoted band of Polish warriors, saved the Christian world from the yoke of a Mahomedan conqueror? It was about the year 1670 that the warlike ruler of the Turkish empire resolved to invade the states of Christian Europe with

a numberless army, and, at the head of his hundreds of thousands of soldiers, to carry destruction into the capitals of Christendom. Already had he defeated the army which the rulers of Germany had sent to resist him,—already had he arrived at the walls of the trembling Vienna, and audaciously stretched forth his hand to withdraw from the towers of St. Stephen the symbol of Christianity, and to replace it by the victorious Crescent. But the glare of the Polish weapons appeared like the lightning of heaven among the Turkish troops, who, intoxicated by the hopes of their booty, had already in imagination divided among themselves the wealth and possessions of those Christian countries which lay open before their hitherto unconquered arms. A frightful struggle ensued; but the God of the Christians fought at the side of a handful of Polish warriors, and the thousands of their unbelieving opponents fell before their swords like the stalks of a ripened harvest before the sickle of the reaper. Oh! then was the name of Poland great in the eyes of Europe,—then, when the Emperor of Austria, in the face of the inhabitants of his city, embraced the Polish warrior, and avowed an eternal acknowledgment for the timely aid; but scarcely half a century had passed after this memorable event, before Austria, forgetful of her solemn obligation, was foremost in offering her aid to the destruction of that Poland, to whose magnanimous assistance she owed her own salvation.

The state of internal dissension, which has been alluded to above, had made the Polish crown a prey to the ambition of the surrounding powers, till at last it fell into the unworthy

hands of Stanislas Poniatowski, who, although by birth a Polish nobleman, had degraded himself by becoming a tool of the Russian court, hostile to his own country, and by the intrigues of that court he ascended the throne of Poland.

A woman polluted by the excesses of vice and dissipation, Catherine II., was then at the head of the Russian nation; and if the vices of her private life have procured her a most opprobrious celebrity, she deserves by her political deeds the execration of mankind through all future generations; for in the perverted mind of this licentious woman was the project of the partition of Poland first matured.

Austria, incited by the prospect of aggrandizing her dominions, did not shrink from tendering her hand in the execution of that infamous project; and Prussia, ill-renowned for her land-devouring appetite, hastened to lay her covetous grasp upon those portions which fell to her share in the unrighteous spoil. The contemptible monarch, whom the machinations of foreign intrigues had conducted to the head of the Polish nation, was unable to resist the nefarious project of Poland's partition. His disposition and capacity rendered him better qualified to display the effeminate arts of a courtier, and graciously to kiss the hand of that imperial harlot, Catharine II., at whose court he had formerly been an ambassador and a chosen favourite, than to resist with unshaken firmness the covetous encroachments of the intruding oppressors.

Poland, abandoned by her king, and surrounded by her

treacherous and voracious enemies, perceived with feelings of horror and indignation the nefarious proceedings, by which the best parts of her territory were torn from her dominion, and delivered over to that of her allied enemies: she awakened in the hearts of her children an energetic resolution to resist with all their might the spoliation of their native country. Under the standard of the glorious Kosziusko the Poles met in arms, and, attacking the intruders of their native country, they fought with that unshaken bravery in which no nation on earth has ever surpassed the warriors of Poland. All that human strength is able to perform was performed by the Poles during that unexampled warfare, which lasted a whole decennium, and during which Poland, isolated and single-handed, resisted and often defeated the united powers of Russia, Austria, and Prussia. But it was in vain that Kosziusko and his followers struggled against the inexhaustible forces of the enemies of Poland; in vain were the efforts of their valour,—the battles that were won and the armies that were defeated; they succumbed at last to the overwhelming power of their enemies, and their country was subjected to new spoliation.

The greater part of her soil was covered with the Russian and Prussian armies, and the nefarious conquerors united the provinces, which they held in military possession, with their own dominions. The Poles, seeing the unavoidable destruction of their own country, wished rather to die in combat with their enemies than to live and see the downfall of their beloved fatherland; they renewed the combat of despair, not with the hope of victory, but with the wish

of an honourable death in the battle. All the regular forces of Poland had been destroyed in former struggles, and Kosziusko saw himself forced to offer defiance to the power of his opponents, although only supported by a handful of undisciplined and incompletely armed countrymen. But their devotedness and the skill of their leader supplied the want of strength and experience ; they defeated their enemy, and 40,000 Prussians were obliged to retreat before a collected band of Polish countrymen. But nothing could avert the destiny of their doomed country ; Kosziusko, wounded on the field of battle, fell into the hands of the enemy, and the Poles, deprived of theirleader, were unable to make a successful resistance. They struggled, but fell ; the conquering enemy entered their capital, and filled it with the horrors of his unheard-of cruelty. The miserable king, Stanislas, went as a guest to the capital of the Russian Jezebel, while her troops exercised all kinds of barbarous abominations upon his former subjects. Neither sex nor age afforded any protection against the brutality of the Russian troops, who, encouraged by the example of their general, Souvarow, (great as a soldier, but infamous as a man,) committed deeds of ingenious cruelty, to the repetition of which my pen refuses its service. When the passion for blood had been satiated in the gore of the Polish people, then the powers divided among themselves all the remainder of that unhappy country ; and that which once was Poland has thus been changed into the provinces of foreign despots.

I shall not dwell upon reflections on the baseness and inhumanity of that political piracy, by which this nation, crushed

by an unjust warfare, has been destroyed; but my intention is to make a few remarks on the imprudence of those who acquiesced in this political crime, and on the dangers resulting from the abominable proceedings of those by whom it was perpetrated. I have already remarked that the balance of power in Europe, the main object of the continual efforts of politicians and diplomatists, reposed around the kingdom of Poland as round a centre of gravity. This mighty focus of attraction being withdrawn by the destruction of Poland, it became necessary to compensate for it by some artificial means, which offered but a very precarious surety for the future tranquillity of Europe. It is indeed true, that those devastating and lasting wars, which for more than twenty years after the partition of Poland stained the soil of Europe with the blood of her children, cannot be attributed exclusively to this division; but it is certain that, even after the restoration of peace, a state of anxiety and disquietude has prevailed in European politics, which is chiefly to be ascribed to the absence of the barrier which Poland constituted between the north-eastern and south-western countries of Europe. Peace prevails now among the powers of Europe, and it has already endured during a whole generation; but still it is a peace without rest and enjoyment, a peace during which the nations have to bear all the burdens and inconveniences of war, since the European powers are obliged to compensate for that barrier to ambitious designs which formerly existed in the breasts of Polish warriors, by a continual armament in order to keep each other in awe and apprehension. In one word, that system which but lately has so emphatically been designed as an "ARMED peace," is only occasioned by the

absence of a vigorous and neutral power in the kingdom of Poland, and an European disarmment will remain a problem, of which the solution will be impossible, until Poland is restored to power and independence. The truth of this idea, though never openly acknowledged, was notwithstanding prevalent in the minds of those diplomatists who after the downfall of Buonaparte, decided on the fate of European nations at the Congress of Vienna. They agreed upon the necessity of re-establishing the nationality of Poland; but the powers assembled in Vienna were induced, by the peculiar circumstances of the period, into a practical error, the consequences of which, to the present day, are pressing heavily on the necks of their subjects. Alexander, then Emperor of Russia, had been particularly active in the combat against the common enemy, the French oppressor of continental Europe; Alexander was, moreover, regarded as being possessed of such personal qualities as were favourable to the maintenance of peace, and this circumstance induced the Congress to intrust to his hands the palladium of peace, in making him the protector of Polish nationality.

The powers of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, pledged each other to preserve in the Polish provinces belonging to their dominion the national institutions and laws which formerly belonged to ancient Poland, and a new kingdom of Poland was created by the bestowal of that name upon the Polish provinces of Warsaw, and others united under the Russian dominion: the Czar of the Russians was made *King of Poland;* he swore to proteet her national rights and to respect her independence, as other foreign princes always had done while they wore the Polish crown; he

swore never to attempt any proceeding which aimed at levelling the freeborn nobles and citizens of Poland with the ancient subjects of the Russian crown, the Muscovite slaves !

Under these auspices began the reign of the newly created kingdom of Poland, which certainly bore but little resemblance to her ancient power and glory, but which, nevertheless, was regarded by the children of that unhappy country as the centre of national hope and affection. But the hope of seeing at least a shadow of Polish nationality preserved by the settlements of the Congress of Vienna was soon destroyed ; for Alexander's first measure with respect to the government of the new kingdom was to intrust its destiny to the hands of his brother Constantine, a man who, on account of the brutality of his conduct, had, by a family compact, been obliged to renounce his right of succession to the Russian crown. In nominating this monster as commander-in-chief of the Polish army, and giving him at the same time the most unbounded power with respect to the civil administration, Alexander manifested his intention to render the Poles, by unheard-of vexations, tired of their national independence, and ready to suffer in silence the long projected design of rendering Poland a mere Russian province. It is impossible to give to an inhabitant of civilized Britain a just idea of the condition of Poland during the reign of this madman with the passions of a fiend, the Grand-Duke Constantine.

It must sound strangely in the ears of the citizens of a constitutional country, in which the authority of the law stands so

high above every encroachment of arbitrary despotism, that the population of a whole country should be submitted to the most despotic caprice of a single individual; that the life and property of millions should be at the uncontrolled disposition of a madman, whom the condition of his mind rendered more fit to the inhabitant of a Bedlam than the ruler of a country, The condition of Poland under the sway of the Grand-Duke Constantine presents a picture of such anarchical tyranny, that even the worst periods of Roman History, relating the deeds of its Neros and Domitans, can hardly offer a parallel to his crimes. Every day of his reign was marked by some atrocious proceeding against the life, the freedom, or the property of his victims, and he delighted particularly in selecting these victims from among those who, by the integrity of their character, and the respectability of their station, were considered as enjoying particularly the love and esteem of their fellow citizens.

Without the slightest shadow of a pretext, without attempting any form of legal proceeding, Constantine issued decrees, by which the Poles were plunged into frightful dungeons, and their property confiscated; nay, their bodies were often maimed and mutilated, or even their lives taken away, without any crime or misdeed that could be laid to their charge. When a man had fallen into the hands of the executioners of the tyrant's will, none of his family or relations dared to make the slightest inquiry about his fate; for the least interest betrayed in favour of one of his victims was sufficient to subject the sympathising individual to a similar treatment. The reader, who for the

honour of human nature might be unwilling to give full credit to this statement, may rest assured that it largely palliates the real state of those facts which might easily be enumerated, if the details of such atrocities were not too disgusting for the tastes of English readers. Still the inhabitants of Poland bore the iron yoke of the Russian tyrant with patient forbearance during the period of the life and reign of the Czar Alexander; for the barbarities of his brother Constantine had been confined during this period to cruel proceedings *against individuals*, and the Poles had some hopes that a change might be obtained from the personal disposition of their sovereign. They hoped that Alexander, who had sworn a solemn oath to protect the ancient institutions of Poland, might be moved by the representation of their unparalleled wrongs, by their entreaties and petitions, and that a term might be put to the cruel rule of their wrathful governor. They therefore bore during fifteen years the heavy yoke of oppression, and stifled the bursting groans of their just indignation. But their hopes of a peaceful alleviation of their burdens were buried in the tomb of Alexander, for at the accession to the throne of the present emperor, Nicholas, decrees were issued, the contents of which destroyed the last beam of hope for final justice to Poland; for in these decrees it was settled, that the whole power of legislation, justice, and execution should for all futurity be absorbed in the sovereign will of the emperor, and his representative the grand-duke: and thus the *individual* outrages, which had hitherto been committed, were sanctioned for all future times, and measures were taken to extend to the whole nation sufferings similar to those which had hitherto been the fate of single

persons. With this view of hopeless oppression throughout all future ages before them, the Poles at last resolved to deliver themselves from their insufferable tyrants by an armed rise and resistance.

The Russian army, consisting of natives of Poland, was favourable to the national cause, and served but unwillingly as a tool for the oppression of its own country. A favourable moment for the outbreak of a revolutionary undertaking appeared to have come at the time when a general excitement prevailed throughout Europe, occasioned by the French revolution in the year 1830. It is a most remarkable circumstance, and one which throws a peculiar light on the behaviour of the French government during the period of the last ten years, that after the French revolution in July 1830 the government of their newly created king, Louis Philippe, sent emissaries and agents to Poland, in order to excite the inhabitants of that country to revolt against Russia. The French king, conscious of the hatred prevailing against him in the breasts of the legitimate monarchs, wished to excite their subjects to revolt, in order to engage their strength in the struggle against their own people, and thereby divert their attention from France.

The agents from Paris, furnished with authentic letters from the most influential personages, promised the chiefs of the then preparing Polish insurrection the most energetic support on the part of France, and thereby contributed much towards hastening the outbreak of the Polish revolution ; while in disappointing the confidence which the Poles had placed upon their solemn

promises, they in great measure loaded themselves with the moral responsibility for the deplorable consequences of that outbreak.

The 29th of November 1830 was the day on which the Poles rose for the purpose of overthrowing the yoke of their foreign oppressor. The events which followed that day are known to the world; they are known to history, and will never be forgotten. Victory crowned at the outset the arms of Poland: we saw the armies of the Muscovites defeated by the superior bravery of Polish warriors; we saw the rising sun of freedom gilding the hills of our beloved fatherland. Happy thrice happy, are those thousand of Polish warriors who, at the battles of Grochow and Ostrolenka, fell in the sacred warfare for their country's freedom, and whose dying ears were gratified with the glorious cry of Victory! Happy are those who lie buried in the bosom of their native soil; but *woe* to their unhappy survivors—for all the golden fruits of their valour, all that their victorious arms had won in the wild storms of battle, were taken away by the blackest deeds of their treacherous enemies. It is an historical fact that the Russian arms would never have prevailed in open combat against the treacherous conduct of the neighbouring powers, particularly of Prussia, who under the appearance of friendly neutrality, undermined the energies of the Polish troops, while affording their enemies every support in arms and munition; nay, it is even proved beyond doubt, that a great number of Prussian officers fought in the ranks of the Russians, and aided in the oppression of the Poles. Poland, surrounded by treacherous enemies, and

struggling against a military power that was ten times superior in number,—Poland, abandoned by France, who had solemnly pledged her assistance, fell again into the hands of her oppressor

To the eternal shame of France, ever vainly boasting of her national glory,—of that France, who, on the most frivolous occasions, displays such ridiculous sensibility with respect to her national honour,—it must be said, and it cannot be denied, that the downfall of Poland has stained the name of ***France*** with everlasting ignominy. For however hateful Russia may appear as a cruel and barbarous conqueror, the policy pursued by France, that namely of a double-tongued friend and adviser, is still more contemptible. It is proved by authentic documents, that during the struggle between Poland and Russia the Polish general, Skrzinezki, devised a project for centralizing all the power of Poland, and by an unexpected and most judicious, however daring, movement, transferring the theatre of war into the heart of the Russian country itself. The French agents sent by Louis Philippe interfered, and by their entreaties and renewed promises of diplomatical and powerful protection, succeeded in dissuading the leaders of the Polish cause from the execution of this project, which alone would have been able to give a chance of success to their cause, or at least to secure them an advantageous position for entering into negociations with their enemies. Thus the Poles were defeated more by the treacherous conduct of Prussia, and by the false and wicked advice of France, than by the Russian arms. But *then*, when Poland was subdued,—when the waves of the Vistula were stopped,

from their inability to carry down the numberless bodies of the slain,—when the ground of the country was so saturated with the blood of its children that it refused to swallow the gory stream of the new victims,—when Praga was a heap of ashes, and the streets of Warsaw were literally covered with the bodies of murdered women and children,—at that awful period, which filled the breast of every human being with horror and indignation,—at that period, was it that Count Sebastiani, then minister of France, declared in Paris, before the tribunal of the French parliament, that *peace and order prevailed in the capital of the Poles!* Peace indeed prevailed after the slaughter; for where is to be found a peace more complete, a silence more profound, than belongs to the mounds of the churchyard, by which the ashes of the dead are covered! yes, indeed, peace,—the peace of the tomb—prevailed in Warsaw, prevailed throughout Poland!

At the outbreak of the insurrection the Emperor Nicholas had issued a proclamation containing merely the words—"*To the Poles: Submission or death.*" He has literally fulfilled the threat contained in these words; a nation has been murdered to expiate the political crimes of the world, and France was the Judas Iscariot, who with a kiss betrayed the martyred country of Poland into the hands of the Russian Herod.

It is known what has been the fate of the remnants of the Polish nation after the downfall of their country;—it is known that those among the survivors who did not escape from the vengeance of the Czar, felt the whole weight of his merciless

cruelty; that not only men, but even women and children were slaughtered, *not* in the fury of a violent conquest, but by the slow and deliberate hand of the public executioner;—it is known that the wives and daughters of Polish nobles, whose ancestors had been invested with royal splendour, were forced into an infamous alliance with common Russian soldiers, and obliged to follow them as their husbands to distant climes! Moreover these barbarous deeds have not merely been committed in the wrath of a newly awakened passion, but are perpetrated with cool deliberation at the period of the present day, after ten years having elapsed since the revolution: and the wrath against Poland is not yet satisfied by the thousands of fallen victims. But although Poland is literally extirpated from the number of European nations, the hope of her resurrection lives still within the breasts of thousands of her banished children. An invisible hand unites the exiled remnants of the Polish people; and, although they are scattered on the face of the earth, their common feeling of love for their country binds them with a powerful chain that reaches from the burning sands of Egypt to the banks of the St. Lawrence, from Douro to the Thames, from the Armorican coasts to the Algerine cities, and fetters in its mysterious links the hearts and hands of thousands of Polish wanderers, whose bodies have indeed been separated by cruel fate, but whose souls are united in an overwhelming desire to see the resurrection of their country, or to lay down their wearied bodies in their parental soil.

It is my intention, to express at the conclusion of these re-

marks, the views and considerations upon which the hopes for Poland's future resurrection may be founded; but, before entering upon this political inquiry, I must be permitted to give a short account of the fate and condition of the Polish emigration from the downfall of Warsaw to the present day. The hopes of the Poles were not quite destroyed at the conquest of their city; for the scattered fragments of the Polish army would still have been a formidable power if the project formed by General Dwernizki for uniting these fragments and renewing the combat had been crowned with success. And this project would certainly have come to a favourable end if Prussia had strictly maintained that neutrality to which she was bound by the law of nations, but which was violated in favour of the Russian power. For while the Prussian authorities afforded to the Russian troops every opportunity of providing for their provisions, arms, and munition,—while they even accorded to them a free permission to pass in arms over the bordering territory of Prussia, to facilitate their movements,—they not only withheld from the Polish troops every means of support which, arriving for them, passed through the Prussian dominions, but they rendered impossible the reunion of the Poles by disarming and declaring as prisoners of war every Polish detachment that approached the Prussian frontier. The disarmed Poles, thus fallen into the hands of the Prussian tyrant, were transported by the police force like criminals from station to station. They were kept under strong guard, and when it happened that a number of Polish soldiers, disarmed and under the bayonets of their keepers, expressed an ardent desire to return, even without arms, to Poland, and there join the bands of their still fighting

brothers, the Prussian soldiers were ordered to discharge their muskets upon their unarmed and unresisting captives, and thus to silence in their blood their complaints for the loss of their country. This act of cold-blooded murder was committed by Prussian officers under the reign of Frederick William, whom his flattering contemporaries have named "*the Just*," but whose name in history will be marked with an indelible stain for his treacherous cruelty towards the unhappy victims of Poland.

As long as the Polish refugees remained upon the territory of Prussia, their treatment was equally harsh and inhuman as if they had fallen captives in the hands of their open enemy. Those who a few months before had lived as independent and wealthy noblemen in opulence and honour upon their estates, were now confounded with their vassals, in the hands of a foreign oppressor, and their sufferings on account of their fallen country were increased by the personal indignities inflicted on them by their brutal keepers. But much better was their condition, and a new star of hope rose before their tearful eyes, when they proceeded from the Prussian frontier into the dominions of southern Germany, where the expression of the kindred feelings nourished by the German people was no longer restrained by the despotic authority of the Prussian government. The Germans, in spite of the hostile dispositions of their rulers, exhibited during the struggle in Poland a most decided sympathy for the Polish cause. The Germans knew that the Polish warriors combated for the general cause of freedom and civilization against despotism and northern barbarism;

they knew that the ambitious views of the Russian tyrant were particularly directed towards exercising an overwhelming influence in Germany, and that all his present efforts were dedicated to the object of checking the progress of the German states towards the establishment of constitutional liberty; for the crafty despot is well aware that a nation possessed of the blessing of civil freedom, warranted by the authority of legal institutions, cannot easily be subjugated by a foreign oppressor. The Germans rightly considered the Poles as the martyrs of a common interest, and accordingly they received them as their unfortunate brothers, who had spilt their blood and lost their possessions in resisting the common enemy. The procession of the Poles through Germany was more like a triumphal march than a retreat of exiled fugitives.

Similar feelings appeared to prevail in their favour when they arrived beyond the river Rhine, upon the ground of France,—of that France for whom many of the present warriors had fought and bled, under the command of the imperial eagle of Corsica; of France that had raised such proud and lofty hopes in the hearts of Polish patriots, and then basely betrayed them. The people certainly had no share in the unworthy proceedings of their government; the people knew that the French name had been used in a nefarious manner, to create false expectations, and, in disappointing them, to ruin the cause of Poland; the people wished to disclaim their being accomplices in that political crime, and, with the vivacity of the French disposition, the population of whole cities, aye, and of whole provinces too, publicly and solemnly pledged

their firmest resolution to assist the unfortunate exiles in the restitution of their country! But alas! the French impetuosity is like a meteor of the air, that brilliantly lightens and suddenly vanishes ;—the deluded Poles considered the brightness of French enthusiasm at their arrival as being the dawn of new light and glory for their Polish fatherland; but soon they experienced that it was nothing but the expiring flash of the falling star of their national hopes and wishes. Scarcely a few weeks had passed since their arrival, when the people of France looked with indifference upon these wanderers, whom they had welcomed so fervently; and, having just pledged their sacred vows to revenge their wrongs committed in distant lands by foreign oppressors, they now suffered similar outrages to be committed under their own eyes and through the hands of their own government. The Poles hoped at least to obtain from the French generosity the opportunity of remaining united in a Polish legion (as had formerly existed under the sway of Buonaparte), and thus to preserve, however far from their country, the remembrance of the national arms of Poland.

But even this favour was refused to their reiterated supplications; they were separated; some of them partly forced, partly persuaded, to enter the foreign legion in Algeria; others kept,—with a most parsimonious allowance, like prisoners of war, under the guardianship of the police force; others, under frivolous pretexts, even driven out from the soil of France, and persecuted with an animosity, which surpassed,—if not in brutality, at least in perfidious vexation,—that of the Prussian monarch. Thus banished even from the soil of that country

which, more than any other, was most sacredly bound to afford them help and protection, a number of Polish exiles arrived on the shores of Great Britain, where at least they are permitted to shed their tears, and to express their feelings for their lost country, without being exposed to the vexations of a brutal police; where at least they find in the hearts of freeborn and generous Britains—instead of that impetuous and barren excitement of French feelings—a quiet but lasting compassion for their sufferings, and that delicate esteem which is the most soothing balm for the wounds of undeserved misfortune.

But I have said that these exiled warriors of Poland have not yet abandoned their hopes for the resurrection of their country; that a mysterious chain unites them all in a common desire and expectation of seeing the day on which the white eagle of Poland may again unfold its powerful wings and fly before the armed bands of her warriors, hastening to the combat for reconquering their native soil. Their expectations are not founded upon the boastful and vain declamations of the Gallican people, but upon those more solid dispositions in the minds of the Teutonic race which have gloriously manifested themselves in the establishment of British freedom and nationality, and which led with slow but firm steps the progress of the German people towards national greatness and independence.

The dangers arising to the progress of European civilization from the despotic projects of Russia are clearly understood, and often demonstrated, in Germany and England. In the former country a new era has recently commenced by the accession to

the throne of the present king of Prussia, who, duly appreciating the claims of the German people to national and constitutional freedom, has declared his resolution to promote throughout the extent of his dominions the harmonious establishment of national institutions, of civil freedom, and of representative government. These wise and enlightened proceedings of the Prussian government are calculated to create in Germany a new policy, which, being that of national and constitutional interests, will be as decidedly inclined to resist the ambitious encroachments of Russia, as to enter into a close and friendly alliance with England, the only country in Europe in which the international interests of the European family of states are duly appreciated.

An alliance between Germany and England, founded upon their mutual efforts for promoting commercial prosperity, politial freedom, and national civilization throughout Europe, will be so much opposed to the present system, and to the political views of Russia, that a struggle must issue, the result of which cannot be doubtful to those who believe in an all-powerful and benevolent Providence, which rules the destiny of humanity. Far indeed should it be from human presumption to murmur against the mysterious ways by which a whole nation may pass under a cloud and be oppressed by enduring calamities ; but we may still look forward to Him who weighs in his hands the fate of nations, and decides on the destiny of the human race, with exhilarating hope, and in the firm confidence that He will never permit injustice and oppression to prevail against the highest claims of human society to enjoy the blessings of the earth, and the works of their industry, in peace and justice, in mutual

charity, and in unceasing gratitude toward the Giver of all that is good. In this faith have the exiles of Poland endured the miseries of the past, and still support the sufferings and indignities of the present,—and inspired by these feelings do the wanderers in foreign lands look forward to a future in which they shall be once more united in security and happiness upon their native soil. Faith and confidence in our Almighty Protector is that which supports us,—the unhappy children of a bleeding country,—in our sufferings, and which imparts to us the confident assurance that He will restore us, in his powerful benevolence, to the beloved soil of our fathers.

THE END.

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